



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

Blindness Awareness Month

WHEREAS, more than two-thirds of visually impaired adults in the United States are over 65 years of age; and nearly 20.5 million Americans age 40 and older are afflicted with cataracts, which is the leading cause of blindness in the United States; and

WHEREAS, across the globe, a child goes blind every single minute, and some 37 million people are blind and 124 million severely visually impaired; however, the World Health Organization estimates that 75% of all blindness can be treated, cured, or prevented by highly cost-effective means; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of blindness increases rapidly in later years, particularly after age 75; and the number of Americans with age-related eye disease is expected to double within the next three decades unless something is done to reverse the trend, according to EyeCare America, which is the public service foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology; and

WHEREAS, World Sight Day in October was launched by Lions Clubs International in 1998 to recognize and reinforce the importance of eradicating preventable blindness; and, since its inception, events have been held on six continents to observe this day, including cataract and glaucoma screenings, collection of used eyeglasses for recycling, and distribution of educational material; and

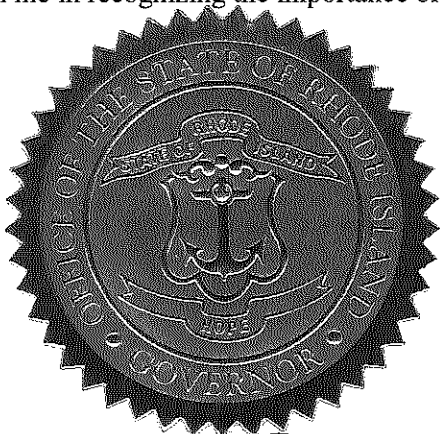
WHEREAS, World Sight Day is supported around the world by governments, health care providers, professional associations, and other concerned individuals who are working together with a shared commitment to eliminate avoidable blindness worldwide by the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, Lighthouse International, a leading resource on vision impairment and rehabilitation worldwide, celebrates, in concert with World Sight Day in October, National Vision Rehabilitation Day, which features a public awareness campaign designed to educate Americans about the prevalence of vision impairment and the critical importance of vision rehabilitation services, counseling, and training that help people overcome the challenges associated with vision loss; and

WHEREAS, October is recognized as Blindness Awareness Month by the American Academy of Ophthalmology; and

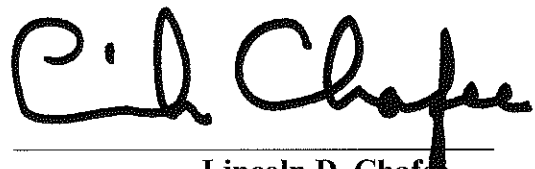
WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island should support the vitally important work of enhancing public awareness about ways to prevent, treat, and cure blindness and other serious visual impairments that are highlighted by these events during the month of October; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby proclaim October, 2011 as Blindness Awareness Month in Rhode Island and encourage all of its citizens to join me in recognizing the importance of this month.




A. Ralph Mollis
Secretary of State

Given under my hand and the great
seal of the State of Rhode Island
and Providence Plantations,
this 14th day of September, 2011


Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor